

# Public Health Emergency Extended Once Again – but End is Near



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Despite declaring the pandemic was “over,” the [federal government extended the public health emergency \(PHE\)](#) for another 90 days last month. The PHE, which now expires on January 11, 2023, has been in place since early 2020. Now in its third year, it’s difficult to remember what flexibilities it affords. As experts predict this may be the final renewal, it’s an opportune time to review the relevant waivers that will expire with the emergency declaration.

When the PHE concludes, the following changes may be made by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) for Medicare beneficiaries:

- Health care professionals – physical therapists, speech language pathologists, etc. – who are not physicians or advanced practice providers will no longer be able to provide services via telemedicine.
- Audio-only services will be corralled, instead requiring audio and video equipment

that permits a two-way, real-time interaction between the patient and the provider unless an exception is granted for the particular service.

- Provider enrollment will roll back to pre-pandemic procedures; there will be no expedited processing. Practitioners will be required to resume reporting their home address on the Medicare enrollment. States will again oversee where a provider can practice.
- Patients outside of rural areas and patients in their homes will no longer be eligible for telemedicine services. Prior to the pandemic, Medicare covered telemedicine when it was in a physician office or hospital setting, and it is expected that this will again be the case.

These changes will be set in stone 151 days after the conclusion of the PHE, allowing several months to transition back to the pre-pandemic protocols.

The government is accepting applications to waive these impending changes if dictated by your situation (or that of your patient[s]). Send your request or questions to [1135waiver@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:1135waiver@cms.hhs.gov). If you are serving a home-bound patient via telemedicine, for example, consider applying for an exemption.

For more information about the [conclusion of the PHE](#), [see this link](#).

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